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ABSTRACT

A total of 163 teachers were involved in a study to determine whether primary school teachers exhibited different attitudes toward specific kinds of oral reading errors than did teachers of older students, whether the attitudes of teachers of English as a second language and special education teachers were similar to the attitudes of regular classroom teachers, whether the number of years of teaching experience made a difference in teachers' attitudes, and whether familiarity with miscue analysis made a difference in those attitudes. The subjects were administered an "error survey" composed of different types of oral reading errors. The results revealed clear patterns of variation in teachers' attitudes toward children's oral reading errors, with the most interesting variations occurring when dialect errors were compared with other types of errors. Specifically, the findings showed that primary school teachers were less concerned about the seriousness of the dialect errors than were teachers of older students, that teachers of English as a second language and special education teachers viewed the dialect errors with the greatest severity, and that teachers with more years of teaching experience and a familiarity with miscue analysis viewed dialect errors as less serious than did other teachers. (FL)

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Variations in Attitudes Toward Children's Oral Reading Errors

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The assessment of teachers' attitudes toward children's oral reading errors is important because of the likelihood of attitudes affecting teachers' behaviors, both in formal classroom situations and in informal contact with students. The kinds of oral reading errors that students make may trigger varying responses from teachers, and researchers have investigated teachers' attitudes toward dialect variations (K. Goodman & Buck, 1973; Simons & Johnson, 1974; Cunningham, 1975, 1976-77; Ramig & Granger, 1978).

In considering such assessment, the following questions arose: Will primary teachers (grades K - 3) exhibit different attitudes toward specific kinds of oral reading errors than teachers of older students? Will the attitudes of TESOL (Teaching English as a Second

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Language) teachers and spedial education teachers be similar to the attitudes of regular teachers? Will the number of years of teaching experience make a difference in teachers' attitudes? Will familiarity with miscue analysis (Y. Goodman & Burke, 1972) make a difference in teachers' attitudes? To address these questions, teachers in a variety of graduate courses and seminars were given an "error survey" composed of different types of oral reading errors, such as dialect errors versus errors having graphic similarity to the text but having a different meaning from the text.

Method

Subjects

The subjects were 163 teachers. There were 29 teachers of grades K - 3, 66 teachers of grades 4 - 12, 49 TESOL teachers, and 19 special education teachers.

Error Survey

The error survey had 32 items, each consisting of a pair of sentences with children's oral reading errors marked. Teachers were instructed to choose the sentence with the more serious error for each pair.

In selecting items for the survey, we used an analysis of oral reading errors derived from Goodman and Burke's Reading Miscue Inventory (1972). Thus each reading error in the survey was categorized as being graphically similar to or different from the text, syntactically normal or odd, semantically normal or odd, with or without meaning change from the text, and a dialect variation or not. On the basis of this analysis, oral reading errors for the survey were chosen which would allow us to compare the effects of graphic

similarity with the effects of semantic and syntactic normality, dialect variation, and meaning change in the subjects' judgments of error seriousness. Table 1 shows the criteria used for formulating each of nine categories and gives examples of the categories.

Insert Table 1 about here

Items were constructed in the following way:

(1) Dialect variations of the text were compared with errors which were graphically similar to the text, but which showed a meaning change. (The dialect variation could be either graphically similar to or different from the text. Sentences with meaning change were variable as to semantic/syntactic normality.) Thus the comparisons were Category 1 vs. Categories 9, 8, and 6, Category 2 vs. Category 6, and Category 3 vs. Category 9. (Of course, not every possible pairing of the nine categories was included on the survey, since the length of the task had to be reasonable. Therefore, only those pairings which seemed to provide the most crucial information were used.)

(2) Errors which were graphically different from the text but which were semantically/syntactically normal and showed no meaning change were compared with errors which were graphically similar to the text, but did show a meaning change. Again, sentences with meaning change were variable as to semantic/syntactic normality. Thus the comparisons were Category 4 vs. Categories 9, 8, and 6.

(3) Errors which were graphically different from the text and showed a meaning change, although they were semantically and syn-

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tactically normal, were compared with graphically similar errors which were syntactically and/or semantically odd, in addition to showing meaning change. Thus the comparisons were Category 7 vs. Categories 8 and 9.

(4) Multiple errors or insertions which were semantically/syntactically normal and showed no meaning change were compared with graphically similar errors which were semantically/syntactically odd, and did show a meaning change. Thus the comparison was Category 5 vs. Category 9.

Findings

Differences in judgments concerning degree of seriousness of the types of oral reading errors are presented for the dialect comparisons in Table 2. For the main groups (K - 3, 4 - 12, TESOL & special education), it is interesting to note that for all the category comparisons, the K - 3 teachers viewed the dialect errors as less serious than did the 4 - 12 teachers, and the TESOL and special education teachers viewed the dialect errors as more serious than the other two groups of teachers. Teaching experience seemed to make a difference, especially for the 4 - 12 teachers, with the more experienced teachers (4 or more years of experience) viewing the dialect errors as less serious than the teachers with 3 or less years of experience.

Insert Table 2 about here

Familiarity with miscue analysis also seemed to make a difference, especially for the more experienced teachers, who viewed the dialect errors as less serious in almost all of the category comparisons

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than the teachers without miscue familiarity. The data concerning dialect comparisons and miscue familiarity are presented in Tables 3 - 5.

Insert Tables 3 - 5 about here

Although the findings concerning the dialect comparisons seemed to be the most interesting, there were some other salient findings. For all the groups combined (N=163), the percentages were as follows: Category 8 vs. 4, 92% vs. 8%; Category 6 vs. 4, 88% vs. 12%; Category 9 vs. 4, 87% vs. 13%; Category 7 vs. 9, 66% vs. 34%; Category 7 vs. 8, 46% vs. 54%; and Category 5 vs. 9, 15% vs. 85%.

Discussion

There were clear patterns of variation in teachers' attitudes toward children's oral reading errors, the most interesting variations occurring when dialect errors were compared with other types of oral reading errors. Perhaps it is not surprising that the K - 3 teachers were less concerned about the seriousness of the dialect errors than were the 4 - 12 teachers. However, the fact that the TESOL and special education teachers viewed the dialect errors with the most severity was surprising and somewhat distressing. The other two influences that were related to teachers' viewing dialect errors with less severity were the teachers' familiarity with miscue analysis and years of teaching experience. Dialect variations imply the comprehension of the text by the student since the student has translated a text word or phrase into his own dialect. Therefore, the fact that the more experienced teachers judged dialect errors with less severity could be viewed as a positive change in elevating comprehension to its rightful place as the most important aspect of reading instruction.

Table 1 Criteria and Examples for the Categories

Category	Criteria for Each Category: Error Comparison With Text					
	Graphically	Semantically	Syntactically	Meaning	Dialect Variation	Other
1	different	-	-	same	yes	
2	similar	-	-	same	yes	
3	-	-	-	same	yes	multiple error, insertion, or omission
4	different	normal	normal	same	no	
5	-	normal	normal	same	no	multiple error or insertion
6	similar	normal	normal	change	no	
7	different	normal	normal	change	no	
8	similar	odd	normal	change	no	
9	similar	odd	odd	change	no	

Examples of the Categories

Category

1 Charles and Michael ~~are~~ they out playing.

2 The farmer who had stolen the meat said to ~~himself~~ hisself, "...

3 For the last few minutes I (have) been trying to remember something. (0 = word omitted)

4 One day a ~~small~~ little deer wanted to go to the other side of the river.

5 He went to his drawer and ~~got~~ he out all the money he had.

6 Behind him he heard ~~shots~~ shouts and the high wild yelling of the young man.

7 The next day, the Tigers were very ~~excited~~ uoset.

8 If he was injured it was his own ~~concern~~ concert.

9 Send Dog at once before we die of ~~hunger~~ hanger.

Table 2 Percentages of Choices of Errors Viewed as More Serious Within Each Category Comparison for Each Group

Category Comparisons		Main Groups			Sub Groups					
		K-3 (N=29)	4-12 (N=66)	TESOL & SP. Ed. (N=68)	K-3 3 yrs. or less (N=10)	K-3 4 yrs. or more (N=19)	4-12 3 yrs. or less (N=30)	4-12 4 yrs. or more (N=36)	TESOL (N=49)	SP. Ed. (N=19)
1	vs	8.62	18.18	24.63	10.00	7.89	25.00	12.50	23.98	26.32
9		91.38	81.82	75.37	90.00	92.11	75.00	87.50	76.02	73.68
1	vs	13.79	18.94	26.84	20.00	10.53	21.67	16.67	28.06	23.68
8		86.21	81.06	73.16	80.00	89.47	78.33	83.33	71.94	73.32
1	vs	5.17	15.91	27.57	5.00	5.26	23.33	9.72	31.12	18.42
6		94.83	84.09	72.43	95.00	94.74	76.67	90.28	68.88	81.58
3	vs	17.24	18.56	26.29	25.00	13.16	25.00	13.19	24.23	31.58
9		82.76	81.44	73.71	75.00	86.84	75.00	86.81	75.77	68.42
2	vs	8.62	12.69	20.22	7.50	9.21	11.25	13.89	22.96	13.16
6		91.38	87.31	79.78	92.50	90.79	88.75	86.11	77.04	86.84

Table 3 Percentages of Choices of Errors Viewed as More Serious Within Each Category Comparison According to Miscue Familiarity for Teachers of Grades K - 3

Category Comparisons		Teachers of Grades K - 3 (N=29)				
		3 Years or Less of Teaching	4 Years or More of Teaching		Subtotals	
		No Miscue [a] (N=10)	No Miscue (N=10)	Yes Miscue (N=9)	No Miscue (N=20)	Yes Miscue (N=9)
1	vs	10.00	10.00	5.56	10.00	5.56
9		90.00	90.00	94.44	90.00	94.44
1	vs	20.00	20.00	0	20.00	0
8		80.00	80.00	100.00	80.00	100.00
1	vs	5.00	5.00	5.56	5.00	5.56
6		95.00	95.00	94.44	95.00	94.44
3	vs	25.00	22.50	2.78	23.75	2.78
9		75.00	77.50	97.22	76.25	97.22
2	vs	7.50	15.00	2.78	11.25	2.78
6		92.50	85.00	97.22	88.75	97.22

[a] There were no teachers with 3 or less years of teaching experience who had miscue familiarity.

Table 4 Percentages of Choices of Errors viewed as More Serious Within Each Category Comparison According to Miscue Familiarity for Teachers of Grades 4 - 12.

Category Comparisons		Teachers of Grades 4 - 12 (N=66)					
		3 Years or Less of Teaching		4 Years or More of Teaching		Subtotals	
		No Miscue (N=14)	Yes Miscue (N=16)	No Miscue (N=21)	Yes Miscue (N=15)	No Miscue (N=35)	Yes Miscue (N=31)
1	vs	28.57	21.88	16.67	6.67	21.43	14.52
9		71.43	78.12	83.33	93.33	78.57	85.48
1	vs	32.14	12.50	26.19	3.33	28.57	8.06
8		67.86	87.50	73.81	96.67	71.43	91.94
1	vs	25.00	21.88	9.52	10.00	15.71	16.13
6		75.00	78.12	90.48	90.00	84.29	83.87
3	vs	28.57	21.88	16.67	8.33	21.43	15.32
9		71.43	78.12	83.33	91.67	78.57	84.68
2	vs	12.50	10.16	19.05	6.67	16.43	8.47
6		87.50	89.84	80.95	93.33	83.57	91.53

Table 5 Percentages of Choice of Errors Viewed as More Serious Within Each Category Comparison According to Miscue Familiarity for Teachers of TESOL and Special Education

Teachers of TESOL and Special Education (N=68)

Comparisons	TESOL Teachers		Special Education Teachers		Subtotals	
	No Miscue (N=38)	Yes Miscue (N=11)	No Miscue (N=15)	Yes Miscue (N=4)	No Miscue (N=53)	Yes Miscue (N=15)
1 vs 9	29.61 70.39	4.54 95.45	30.00 70.00	12.50 87.50	29.72 70.28	6.67 93.33
1 vs 8	28.29 71.71	27.27 72.73	23.33 76.67	25.00 75.00	26.89 73.11	26.67 73.33
1 vs 6	34.87 65.13	18.18 81.82	23.33 76.67	0 100.00	31.60 68.40	13.33 86.67
3 vs 9	25.99 74.01	18.18 81.82	33.33 66.67	25.00 75.00	28.07 71.93	20.00 80.00
2 vs 6	26.32 73.67	11.36 88.64	13.33 86.67	12.50 87.50	22.64 77.36	11.67 88.33

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